

Safety Bulletin No. 04/2017

REMOVAL OF VEGETATION FROM WOOD POLES

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Applicable to	All Overhead Lines Teams and Tree Cutting Teams

The following safety bulletin is issued in relation to the task of removing vegetation such as ivy and other climbing plants that has infested overhead line wood poles and which requires removal by overhead linesmen.

Planning of work

Where the need for such vegetation removal is identified e.g. during a vegetation management survey or reconnoitring of work by overhead lines teams, the method of removal must be considered and in particular whether the vegetation can be removed from the ground and if not whether access by MEWP is practicable i.e. technically possible and safe.

Details of the scope of work and the likely method of removal must then be provided in advance to the overhead lines team who are scheduled to carry out the work.

For all planned removal of vegetation from overhead line wood poles, where the use of a MEWP has been identified as practicable then a MEWP must be taken to site for the work.

For all fault work where the need for such removal is identified and the use of a MEWP has been identified as practicable, arrangements for a MEWP to be on site for the work must be made.

Carrying out of work

On arrival at site the overhead lines team must risk assess the situation and determine if it is practicable to remove the vegetation from the ground and if so remove it in that way. This may include removing the vegetation from the base of the pole to kill it off and returning at a later date to remove it.

If work at height is required to remove any remaining vegetation then Code of Practice 430 must be followed to determine the safest access method.

In accordance with Code of Practice 430 the pole must be inspected which will require removal of all vegetation from the base of the pole to enable hammer testing and other checks on the soundness of the pole.

If the use of the MEWP is practicable then a MEWP must be used in accordance with the requirements of Code of Practice 430 and training including the use of a fall arrest lanyard set up as a fall restraint system.

If removal from climbing irons is necessary then the following specific control measures will be required:

- Two points of attachment – pole choker and fall arrest lanyard - must always be in use when in the working position.
- The pole choker and fall arrest lanyard must not be deployed around any vegetation and must be clearly visible at all times.
- Vegetation should be pulled away avoiding the use of any cutting equipment where possible.
- If any cutting is required the pole choker and fall arrest lanyard should be positioned a safe distance (minimum of 300mm) away from the point of cutting and extreme care taken to avoid cutting into them.

The use of ladders to complete this type of task is prohibited as their use is unlikely to allow the correct inspection and testing of the pole.



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